

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01823 080104Z
ACTION CA-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 VO-05 CPR-02 /019 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5696

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1823

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CVIS, PDIP, BB
SUBJECT: COMPLAINT BY BARBADIAN GOVERNMENT ABOUT U.S. CON-
SULAR NOTATIONS IN BARBADIAN PASSPORTS

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1809

1. SUMMARY: BARBADIAN GOVERNMENT NOTE OBJECTS TO EMBASSY'S USE
OF QUOTE SURREPTITIOUS NOTATION UNQUOTE IN BARBADIAN PASSPORTS
TO INDICATE VISA REFUSALS AND ASKS US TO QUOTE ENSURE THE IMME-
DIATE CESSATION OF THE IRREGULAR PRACTICE END QUOTE.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY REQUESTS EARLY INSTRUCTIONS FOR
RESPONDING TO NOTE. VARIOUS OPTIONS ARE PRESENTED FOR DEPART-
MENT'S CONSIDERATION. END SUMMARY.

3. LAST WEEK, DURING ABSENCE OF BOTH MINISTER AND PERMSEC
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IN WASHINGTON, BARBADIAN GOVERNMENT DELE-
VERED STRONGLY-NOT TO SAY OFFENSIVELY-WORDED DIPLOMATIC NOTE
NO. 1044/3"1/T.2 DATED JUNE 26 CONCERNING (A) EMBASSY'S USE OF
NOTATIONS ON BACK COVERS OF BARBADIAN PASSPORTS TO RECORD VISA
REFUSALS; (B) EMBASSY'S REFUSAL OF VISA TO SPECIFIC BARBADIAN
NATIONAL. SEE BRIDGETOWN 1809 FOR FULL TEXT OF
BARBADIAN NOTE. NOTE WAS AUTHORIZED BY CHIEF OF PROTO-
COL WHO WAS ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY.

4. NOTE RAISES FAIRLY SERIOUS ISSUES: (1) ARE OUR INTERNAL
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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND REVISION
BY ANOTHER GOVERNMENT AND SHOULD WE DISCONTINUE OR MODIFY
OUR PRACTICE OF FLAGGING VISA REFUSALS ON PASSPORTS? (WE
UNDERSTAND THIS IS WORLDWIDE PRACTICE BY U.S. AND OTHER
NATIONS' CONSULAR SERVICES); (2) HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO

BARBADIAN NOTE, INCLUDING ITS COMMENTS ON OUR NON-ISSUANCE

OF VISA TO A SPECIFIED NATIONAL?

5. WE SEE AT LEAST FOUR BASIC OPTIONS FOR MEETING THE ISSUES THE NOTE PRESENTS:

A. POLITELY RETURN NOTE AS A GRATUITOUS INCURSION INTO OUR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES. THE UNACCEPTABLY PEREMPTORY TONE OF THE NOTE WOULD MAKE THIS THE CLASSIC BUT TOUGHEST OPTION. WE WOULD THEREAFTER CONTINUE MAKING NOTATIONS OF VISA REFUSALS ON BACK COVERS OF PASSPORTS. BARBADIAN REACTION TO THIS OPTION PROBABLY WOULD BE ADVERSE BUT MOST LIKELY WOULD NOT RESULT IN MORE THAN DILATORY OR OTHER IRRITATING COUNTER MEASURES. THERE IS ALSO A POSSIBILITY OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY OVER AN ISSUE THAT IS NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD BY THE BARBADIAN PUBLIC.

B. NEITHER RETURN NOR REPLY IN WRITING TO THE NOTE BUT RESPOND ORALLY. THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL WOULD BE ADVISED THAT BECAUSE OF ITS UNACCEPTABLE TERMS THE EMBASSY CONSIDERED REJECTING THE NOTE OUTRIGHT. WE WOULD ALSO NOTE THE GOB'S INTRUSION INTO EMBASSY'S LEGITIMATE PREROGATIVES. WE CONSIDER NOTATIONS AS ONE OF FEW AVENUES OPEN TO US FOR REDUCING ALARMINGLY HIGH NUMBER OF BAD-FAITH APPLICATIONS FOR US VISAS. WE REJECT LANGUAGE QUESTIONING OUR JUDGMENT IN SPECIFIC VISA CASE AS OUT OF PLACE IN DIPLOMATIC NOTE. CONTINUING PRESENTA-
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TION TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, WE WOULD TELL HIM WE ADVISED DEPARTMENT OF GOB VIEWS AND REQUESTED EARLY INSTALLATION OF AVLOS EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD MAKE NOTATIONS UNNECESSARY. HOWEVER, UNTIL NEW SYSTEM INSTALLED EMBASSY INTENDS TO CONTINUE MAKING NOTATIONS, WHICH IS WORLDWIDE PRACTICE IN VARYING FORMS AND DEGREES BY MOST COUNTRIES, INCLUDING, WE UNDERSTAND, UK AND BARBADOS ITSELF. WE WILL NOT CHANGE LOCATION OF NOTATIONS (CHIEF OF PROTOCOL HAD INDICATED PREVIOUSLY THAT STAMP ON VISA PAGE CLERALLY INDICATING VISA REFUSAL WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO HIM). THESE NOTATIONS ARE NOT IN FACT SURREPTITIOUS IN NATURE, BECAUSE THEY ARE EASILY INTELLIGIBLE.

C. MAKE NON-COMMITTAL WRITTEN RESPONSE TO EFFECT U.S. STUDYING THE MATTER

D. WRITTEN REPLY THAT EMBASSY IS DISCONTINUING MAKING NOTATIONS ON BARBADIAN PASSPORTS CONCERNING VISA REFUSALS. DISCONTINUE NOTATIONS.

6. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS OPTION B OR A VARIATION OF B AND C. WE CONSIDER THIS WOULD SAFEGUARD USEFUL CONTROL ME-

CHANISM WHILE AVOIDING UNNEEDED ACRIMONY. INSTRUCTIONS
AWAITED.
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